

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-21 (canceled).

22. (currently amended) An electronic commerce system, comprising:

a host suitably adapted for two-way communication with a plurality of distributors, each of said plurality of distributors offering an inventory of merchandise comprising discrete items; said host suitably adapted to issue orders to the plurality of distributors in response to purchase requests received; ~~sort said discrete items from said plurality of distributors according to an object-oriented class designation model, wherein members of a substantially similar object-oriented class are assigned at least one unique object property value~~; and

a store builder suitably adapted to, in response to a request from a store owner, create a store managed by the host for the store owner ~~request at least one object property value from said host, whereby said host then creates a store for said store builder~~, said store providing a consumer with access, via said distributors, to at least one merchandise item selected from the inventory corresponding to said unique object property value.

23. (currently amended) The electronic commerce system of claim 22, wherein said store is customized by at least one of the following selected by the store owner: top and bottom border design, dominant color, font style, store name, slogan, narrative and URL.

24-28. (cancelled)

29. (currently amended) The electronic commerce system of claim 22 ~~claim 27~~, wherein said store builder sells ~~personalized items from said consumer accessible web site~~

at least one merchandise item personalized in a manner directed by the store owner.

30. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 29, wherein said host conducts administrative functions related to the sale of said personalized items.

31. (currently amended) The electronic commerce system of claim 27, wherein said store builder sells private label items distributed by the store owner in addition to the merchandise items available via the plurality of distributors ~~from said consumer accessible web site.~~

32. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 31, wherein said host conducts administrative functions related to the sale of said private label items.

33. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 23, wherein a single store owner owns multiple stores, each with a different URL.

34. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 33, wherein said host maintains the administration of all of said multiple stores owned by said single store owner.

35. (previously presented) The electronic commerce system of claim 23, wherein said host is not discernable by said consumer.

36-42. (canceled).

43. (new) A method comprising:

maintaining information identifying each of a plurality of products, each product associated with at least one of a plurality of distributors;

receiving, from a store owner, a request to create an electronic store;

transmitting, to the store owner, information identifying at least some of the products;

receiving, from the store owner, a selection of one or more of the products; and

publishing a web site associated with the store owner and through which customers may purchase the selected one or more products, thereby creating the electronic store.

44. The method of claim 43 further comprising:

receiving, from each associated distributor, the information identifying each of the plurality of products provided by that distributor.

45. The method of claim 43 further comprising:

receiving from the store owner a selection of a commission.

46. The method of claim 43 further comprising:

receiving, from the store owner, store customization data; and

generating the web site based on the store customization data.

47. The method of claim 43 further comprising:

receiving, via the web site, a purchase request from a customer, the purchase request identifying a first one of the selected products associated with a distributor;

in response to receiving the purchase request:

billing the customer for the first one of the selected products;

issuing an order to the associated distributor of the first one of the selected products, the order directing the associated distributor to ship the first one of the selected products to the customer;

paying the associated distributor for the first one of the selected products;

and

paying a commission to the store owner.

48. (new) A method of selling products to customers comprising:

accessing a store builder, the store builder having information associated with a plurality of products provided by at least one of a plurality of distributors;

selecting a subset of products from the plurality of products;

requesting the store builder create an online store, thereby causing the store builder to generate a web site through which the subset of the products may be purchased.

49. (new) The method of claim 48 further comprising:

receiving a commission from the store builder on sales generated by the store.

50. (new) A method of offering goods for sale under a pre-existing brand comprising:

in response to a request from a brand owner to create an electronic storefront for the pre-existing brand, providing a list of one or more sales items to the brand owner, wherein each sales item is available for purchase from one or more distributors at a predetermined price;

receiving selections from the list of one or more sales items;

generating an electronic storefront under the pre-existing brand, the electronic storefront offering the selections for sale to consumers;

operating the electronic storefront; and

paying a commission to the brand owner on purchases made via the electronic storefront.

51. (new) The method of claim 50 further comprising:

upon receipt of a purchase request from a first consumer for a first selection via the electronic storefront, issuing a request to a first distributor associated with the first selection.

52. (new) A method of selling an item comprising:

offering the item for sale via an electronic store at a store price;

receiving a purchase request for the item; and

selecting one from a plurality of distributors to fulfill the purchase request, each distributor offering the item for sale at a different distributor's price.

53. (new) The method of claim 52 further comprising:

selecting the one based on a difference between the store price and the distributor's price for the item.